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thor, but admitted by implication, that the measures were forced on government; and rather than resign, he submitted to follow, when he could not controul. His memorable words, which afford so full an exposition of the Orange system, reported by the news-papers as part of his speech, are deserving of being held in remembrance.—“*The loyal party in Ireland were in a sort of rebellion against the government itself.*” These words are a good comment on the past and present state of a desperate faction in Ireland.

The doctrine of the law of libel appears to be more justly settled in France than with us, where, by a fiction in law, lest libel should provoke to a breach of the peace, it has been held technically in opposition to truth, justice, and common sense, “that the greater the truth, the greater the libel.” Truth is admitted as a defence by the penal code of the French Empire. Article 370—“If a charge or imputation made against any person be legally proved, its author shall not be subject to punishment. No proof shall be considered as legal, but such as shall result from a judgment, or other authentic act, or instrument of writing.”

We refer our readers to Christopher Wyvill’s petition in favour of liberty of conscience; to the resolutions and petitions of the Westminster meeting; and to the address of the Catholics of Ireland to the Bishop of Norwich, and his answer, as highly important recent transactions, to which we have given a place among the Documents.

CORRESPONDENCE.

✠ *To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.*

Be not surprised at the liberty I take, or the attention or trouble to which the enclosed may expose you,

as Proprietors of the Belfast Monthly Magazine. It is a faithful transcript of the “Prelude” to be prefixed to the second edition of my Narrative, which I sent off to the printer yesterday. I shall not insult you, by bespeaking your favour, or even your lenity, in any observations which may occur respecting that Narrative. I wish its contents to be candidly considered, and freely discussed. Wherever that shall be done, I fear not the issue on my own account. For every assertion of fact, I have produced undeniable authority. For every thing else, I have repeatedly appealed to the Synod, and proposed to acknowledge any, or every error, into which I may have been led by misinformation, during my exile; and I am happy in being able to say, that I will produce such circumstantial evidence of every thing which I have even suggested, as will justify my information fully to every candid mind.

My wish is, that if the Proprietors of the Belfast Monthly Magazine shall deem the enclosed worthy of a place, and have room for it this month, they would be so good as to insert it.

I must observe, that from the lateness of my knowledge, that a “Prelude” to the 2d edition would be necessary, and the hurry it occasioned, I could not forward this sooner.

My only apology shall be, a request that those addressed will consider my case as their own, and do as to candour shall appertain.

My anxiety to have the proceeding published, or announced, as soon as may be convenient, arises from learning, that my friends are surprised, that I have taken no notice of the Report and Minute.

I am yours, very sincerely,

WILLIAM STEEL DICKSON.

Keady, August 26th, 1812.

"GENERAL SYNOD OF ULSTER.

"*At a Meeting of the General Synod of Ulster, at Cookstown, on the 2d and 3d July, 1812, the following Resolutions were agreed to:—*

"On referring to the Synod's minutes of 1799, it was unanimously resolved, that by the phrase, 'implicated in treasonable or seditious practices,' the Synod did not mean to express any thing more, than that Dr. Dickson and Mr. Smith, two of the persons therein alluded to, had been confined by Government, under suspicion of treason and sedition, and that this Synod now attaches no other meaning to that expression, and if that expression has been otherwise understood or applied, the meaning of the Synod has been misconceived.

"Resolved unanimously, That it is the opinion of this Synod, that in the Narrative published by Dr. Dickson, there are a number of gross mis-statements and misrepresentations, highly injurious to the reputation of the ministers of this body.

"The Synod having thought proper, that Dr. Dickson should publicly retract his mis-statements and misrepresentations, and Dr. Dickson having expressed a wish that the Synod should prepare a declaration to that effect, the Synod appoint Messrs. John Thompson, James Horner, Samuel Hanna, William Wright, and James Bankhead, to meet this evening, and draw up a form of declaration for Dr. Dickson to sign."

"*Friday morning, July 3d, seven o'clock, a.m.*

"The Committee appointed to draw up a form of declaration for Dr. Dickson's signature, submitted it to the Synod, which, after an amendment, was approved of, and handed to Dr. Dickson, for his consideration, until next *sedesunt*.

"The declaration is as follows:—

"'From a sense of the duty which I owe to myself, to the public, and especially to the Reverend Synod of Ulster, I feel myself called upon to acknowledge and declare, in the most public and solemn manner, that my publication, entitled, a *Narrative of the Confinement and Exile of William Steele Dickson, D.D.*, contains a number of mis-statements and misrepresentations, (partly arising from misconception,) injurious to the character of the ministers of this body, and to the Presbyterian cause, and I hope this Reverend Body will now accept my acknowledgments of my deep regret, and sincere contrition, for having published them.'"

"*Friday, half-past ten, a.m.*

"Dr. Dickson having considered the form of declaration offered to him by this Synod, expressed his determination to *decline* giving it his signature.

"Moved, That Dr. Dickson be suspended, *ab officio*, until he shall publicly retract his mis-statements and misrepresentations respecting the ministers of this body, in a manner satisfactory to the Synod.

"To this motion, the following amendment was moved and agreed to, That the consideration of this business be postponed till the meeting of the Synod next year, to allow Dr. Dickson an opportunity of publicly retracting his mis-statements and misrepresentations.

"Resolved unanimously, That this Synod return Dr. Black their hearty thanks for the display of zeal and ability manifested by him in vindicating the honour and character of this body from the aspersions contained in Dr. Dickson's Narrative, and that he be requested to publish his statement in vindication of the ministers of the Synod.

"Dr. Black was thanked accord-

ingly from the chair, and promised to comply with the request of the Synod. "THOMAS CUMING,

"Clerk of General Synod."

Prelude to be prefixed to the second edition of Dr. Dickson's Narrative.

THAT the preceding Report, and the Minute subjoined, deserve some attention, will be admitted by all who read them. That they refer to, or *implicate* matters deserving the most serious consideration of the Presbyterians of Ulster, appears to me equally obvious. And that they involve interests dearer than life, to every man of truth and honour, and much more to a minister of the gospel, every man possessing virtuous sensibility, must feel. They contain in their substance, and exhibit in their complexion, matter, which will leave a stain wherever it may fall, dark, deeply engrained, perhaps indelible.

That I should be at ease, even under a suspicion that this stain should be impressed on my name, cannot be conceived, after the attempts already made. Whether or not it *ought*, the readers of my Narrative shall have as fair an opportunity of judging as I can supply. The proceedings of the last Synod have given the business an importance to which it would not, otherwise, have preferred any claim, and opened an ample field for bold surmise, rash judgment, and unguarded censure, under the impulse of feeling, rather than the guidance of information.

To the attentive reader, it must appear, that the "mis-statements and misrepresentations" charged in the Synod's minute, are neither limited in number, nor defined in quality; and, consequently, cannot be distinctly acknowledged, *retracted*, or repelled. It is true, Dr. Black, in his display of "zeal and

ability, in vindication of the ministers of the Synod," mentioned *six*; but as I neither took notes, nor employed any other so to do, I cannot pretend to recollect them clearly, or specify them correctly. This has obliged me to delay my "*retractions*," or refutations, or whatever they may be, much longer than I wished or intended. I may add, much longer than I expected; as the publication of Dr. Black's *zealous* and *able* statement, in vindication of the ministers of the Synod, would have supplied the defects of the minute. In this expectation I was encouraged by the Doctor's having addressed the Synod from a written paper, and promised to comply with their request to publish his statement, as soon as he should have recovered from the fatigues to which he had been lately exposed. However having heard of his labours in the metropolis, *and some other places*, in the laudable pursuit of *information* and *instruction*, on *interesting* subjects; knowing the length of his journeyings, and witnessed his *extraordinary* exertions, both of body and mind, at Cookstown, I became apprehensive, on recollection, that his *weariness* and *debility*, might be of some duration. Under this apprehension, I took the liberty of troubling the Doctor with a letter, dated, July 16th, requesting, "that he would be so good as to inform me what the *six* charges were, which he had specified against my Narrative, at the late meeting of Synod; as also respecting some other matters, to him, perhaps, unimportant, but to me of some consequence. Having received no answer to this, on the 8th instant, I presumed, on that day, to repeat my request, with some little addition; which request has not yet been complied with.

This still leaves me under the disability of making *retractions* in any

manner, *satisfactory* or *unsatisfactory*, to the Synod. This disability I stated, repeatedly, to the Reverend Body, and called upon them, when talking, as men in their sleep, about the *retraction* of libels and mis-statements unnumbered and undefined; to specify them in *writing*, and note the passages in the Narrative where they respectively began and ended. This they *declined*. However, so soon as this shall be done, either by Dr. Black's promised publication, or his answers to my letters, every *retraction*, consistent with truth and honour, shall be exhibited to the public eye. How far they may be deemed *satisfactory* to the Synod, I do not presume to conjecture. That they will *satisfy* every other man, and body of men, pretending to common sense, candour, and honesty, I humbly trust. And if the Doctor's communications shall be withholden, even for a short time, I shall publish a review of the preceding minute, in all its parts, and a faithful *Statement* of what can be clearly ascertained *by* or *from* it; as also, of the Proceedings of Synod connected with it. For the accomplishment of this promise, every thing is nearly ready for the press, except what may be supplied by, or become necessary from, the Doctor's communications to the public, or to me.

Here, I feel myself induced, in the mean time, to request that my readers may not be misled, by *attaching* the *common* and *approved* meaning to two short words in the preceding minute, as they might thereby be tempted to charge me with meanness or evasion. The former is ("*wish*") in the last paragraph of the Minute of July 2d. Such "*wish*," or, as the correspondent of the Belfast News-Letter expresses it, "*desire*," I never *expressed*. The simple fact is, the Synod de-

manded, from me, a *retraction*, &c. This I peremptorily refused, as it was impossible for me to know what I was required to retract, and called upon them, as I had done before, to specify the alleged mis-statements, &c., in writing, with a form of *retraction satisfactory* to themselves; adding, that when these were produced, I would tell them what I would do. Was this the expression of a wish? I think not. Yet, I candidly own, I felt a *wish* that they would do so, that I might have their object in a visible form, and a power of presenting it to the world, as delineated by their own pen. The specification they declined, as formerly, but prepared a form of retraction, which will command the attention of all who shall read it; and which, as the correspondent writes, "*I declined signing*," and to which, as the Clerk of the Synod, in a more full, more sonorous, and better rounded phraseology, says, "*I expressed my determination to decline giving my signature*."

Here, I take the liberty of suggesting, that neither the one, nor the other, of these expressions, is free from *misrepresentation*. I neither *declined*, nor *expressed my determination to decline*, giving my signature. To "*decline*" signifies to step or turn aside from, to avoid, to shun, &c. I did not shun, evade, or meanly shrink from the demand of signature. I met it in the face, with mingled feelings of astonishment, sorrow, and contempt. I rejected it with disdain; and declared that I would not sign that, or any other paper, expressing, or implying, that I had ever written or represented falsehood as truth, knowing or believing it to be such.—Nay, I could not suppress the exclamation: "What must be the astonishment of the world, on reading this paper, to discover that any body of men, pos-

sessed of, or even pretending to, common-sense, decency, and discretion, could be *seduced*, or *over-awed*, into the preparation of such a paper, or its presentation for signature, to any rational being!!!"

I hope I shall be excused for this *petty* criticism, as it must appear, where it stands, as puerile, pedantic, or peevish. But, when they attend to the *synodical* explanation of a *synodical* phrase, in the first part of the preceding minute, they will perceive, not only its propriety, but the necessity, of great caution, and *uncommon* critical *abilities*, to ascertain the *meaning* of the plainest and most common expressions, when used by that Rev. Body, according to their present *latitudinarian* mode of exposition.

Without dilating farther on what shall soon be exhibited at large, permit me now to request that the public may suspend their final judgment of the vague and indefinite charges contained in the synod's minute—or rather the attempts therein made, by *bold* resolutions, to repel, or invalidate the charges, which my Narrative exhibits against a "dominant faction" in that body, until they shall be duly weighed and appreciated. Whether the one, or the other, or either, shall be deemed of any weight or value, when exhibited face to face, and fairly tried in the balance, depends on that public.

To that public my first *Statement* was addressed. Before it, I shall expose my vindication, retractations, refutations, &c. &c. And in its judgment I shall cheerfully acquiesce.

Every mean shall be used, and *every exertion* made, to render the circulation of my *retractations*, &c. as extensive as that of my Narrative has been, or may be; that my *thousands* of subscribers, embracing *numbers* of the first rank, fortune, and character, in the kingdom, whose good opinion it shall be the pride of my life to preserve, and whose friendship I shall ever remember with gratitude, may be rescued from the dangerous and destructive errors into which my mis-statements and misrepresentations, respecting the "dominant faction" in the Synod of Ulster may have betrayed them:—or convinced that I am not *yet* so destitute of principle, so notorious for misrepresentation, so justly chargeable with injuring the character of the Presbyterian ministers, or the interests of the Presbyterian cause, as Dr. Black and his accomplices. ————— have attempted to expose me: or rather to allure, or intimidate me into an exposure of myself, under my own signature.

WILLIAM STEEL DICKSON.

August 26th, 1812.

PUBLIC OCCURRENCES.

VACCINATION.

*National Vaccine Establishment,
Leicester-Square, March 9th, 1812.*

*Report of the National Vaccine Establishment,
dated 9th March, 1812.*

To the Right Honourable Richard Ryder, Principal Secretary of State, Home Department, &c. &c.

SIR,
The Board of the National Vaccine Establishment have the honour of reporting to you, that during the year 1811, the Surgeons appointed by their authority to the nine stations in London, having vac-